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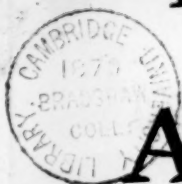
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DISCOURSE

Concerning

Popish Perjuries

IN AN



ADDRESS

To the Honorable the

C O M M O N S of *England*,

In P A R L I A M E N T A s s e m b l e d

A T

O X F O R D.

By *Ric: Beane.*

D U B L I N Reprinted, 1681.

97-1477

YOU have so well begun this Session of Parliament, with Resolutions to preserve His Majesty, the Protestant Religion and Government, and to Search to the bottom, the Plot lately laid, to overthrow all that the Friends to *England*, and the Protestant Cause, rejoyce all over *Europe*, and the Enemies of both despair of accomplishing their evil purposes, which only the expectation of Divisions amongst us gave them hopes to effect.

The Addresse of both Houses and his Majesties ready Condescension for Encouragement of further discoveries will questionlesse have the desired end, and lay open new Misteries of Iniquity, which hitherto have been hidden and concealed in darkness.

But one thing I will request this great Assembly to remember, that when *Lucifer* fell from Heaven, he drew the Third part of the Starrs along with him; And who can imagine that the Pope, the Earthly *Lucifer*, and his Train will suffer here a Total Extirpation, without vigorous attempts of like nature? I think it not Impossible, that the Kings Proclamation how well soever it was drawn and designed, may be so managed by them, as to afford them a fair opportunity of doing mischief.

It is but Lately they endeavoured to place their own Vizors upon others faces, of which practise none of this House, nor scarce any Intelligent Man in *England*, can have been ignorant, or so soon have forgotten.

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The Plot put upon the Protestants, under the distinguishing Character of Presbyterians was too bare-faced to gain the belief which they vainly hoped and expected.

But what if they should turn the Dice, and make some of you, who are Protestants, appear as if you were Papists? though the Plot will not be believed against you as Protestants, Yet as Papists it will easily be believed if it be Sworn to by Persons who have been of the same profession? and such persons it is probable may be sent in by them on pretence of new Converts and fresh Discoverers. In such a Case as this, I would fain know, which way it is possible for you so accused to be Safe. There is just Cause to fear your Innocency will not be able to protect you; for your best Friends will become your bitterest Enemies, when once (besides Treason against the King and the Government) you shall have the Brand of Popery, that Mark of the Beast, fixed on you.

Nay, who knows, but some such new Discoverers, may accuse the King himself to his People, as well as the People to the King, or to the Parliament? and endeavour the opening of such a breach, as can never be stopp'd without horrible Confusion and Destruction?

And although it would be the highest Nonsense in the World, to imagine the King consenting to a Conspiracy against his own Life, and the highest Treason as well as nonsense to tax his Majesty with designs of overturning the Government, wherein he is safe, and wherein he is Supreme; at the cost of the Lives of his best Subjects; to introduce another kind of Government and Religion, wherein he can neither be Safe nor Supreme, nor have his own Subjects at his Command, any longer then it shall please a Forreign and an Arbitray Power.

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Yet what Nonsense will not down with them whose Religion is composed of little else? who teach and embrace an impossible piece of Nonsense as the most exalted part of their Devotion? And what Treason will those men decline who account all Kings Usurpers whom they have pronounced Heretical? and so the Act of destroying them at any rate, is no longer Treason, but a Zealous, Religious and Meritorious Duty, for which they are confident to be rewarded with happy Mansions in Heaven.

Such men, amongst us, whose avowed Principles, or Practices, are Destructive to Society, and Government, our Established Government: (whether they Privately swear to a Catholique League or publickly declare for a *Scotch* Covenant) ought by no means to be endured, but suppress'd, or rather rooted out; yet in the grubbing up these ill weeds, great care should be taken, that the tender Corn receive no prejudice.

There is nothing restrains men who are ill inclined, from putting into Action their evill Intentions, but fear of punishment, either Here or Hereafter.

Suppose now, any Jesuit or Priest, or any of their, or other, blind and Zealous Votaries, or any Hackney Rogues provided by them, (so as they be not publickly known) should be secured ten thousand pound, or other great Reward, to Swear Popery, and High Treason against any of the Lords or Commons, (whom they think fittest to point out for Destruction) and come in, as new Discoverers, and swear positively upon Tryals, in open Court, according to the Laws of this Land: If such Discoverers should happen to be detected of Perjury at the Tryal, they know the utmost of their punishment extends not to Life; but if they be not detected, the Parties so accused, forfeit at once their Lives and Reputation, their Children or next Kindred lose the Estate; and besides, there is intailed,
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on the Names and Families, of such Unfortunate Persons, a lasting, a perpetual Mark of Shame and Infamy.

Pillory and Fine, and Imprisonment, are small pains, for this more then barbarous way of Murdering men, and begging as well as blasting whole Families.

They who have lost their Ears once in the Pillory, have no more to lose, and disgrace touches not where all care or credit is banish'd, and native modesty has given place to Insolence and Impudence it self; A few Rotten Eggs, and turneps, and dirt, are the only punishment they are liable to suffer, and that never more then three times repeated, and two hours a time at the most.

The Fine is never due, so long as the offenders stay in Prison, and if they have money, they may live as plentifully in prison as out of it. The Company is such, as lewd persons are likely to be best pleased with, and so a prison cannot be any punishment at all, where the prisoners live in plenty and pleasant Society.

As for the punishment hereafter; if the perjurers be common Rogues, and Villains, their Consciences, as well as their hands, are scared with a hot Iron; and they never trouble their heads, with things which seem so far off as Eternity. If Bigotted Papists, they are so far from fearing punishment, that they expect Rewards for such meritorious Service, and so these two sorts of persons, make no difficulty of swearing any thing, which carries along with it the face of a probability; and the assurance of a present, or hopes of a future Advantage.

Thus then, it appearing, that where Conscience of Oaths binds not at all, the fear of future Punishment is nothing and while the punishment here, of willful Perjury in Capital Cases, is so disproportionable
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to the greatness of the Crime, I appeal to your selves whether you can believe your selves safe, any longer then your mortal Enemies are willing to let you be so.

Our Laws are defective, in the point of punishing Perjury ; and the Lives of Honest Men are too slenderly guarded against it, (if they be guarded at all) lying exposed to the Rapine or Revenge of any two Rogues or Villains, who have wicked wit enough to make a Combination, and to lay their lyes close together.

I speak this in relation only to the future, for let them be never so Honest Men, who are come in already, yet if a Door be set open, it may let in another sort of men among them.

Therefore as you value the Preservation of the King, and the Government, and the Protestant Religion ; As you value your own Lives, and the Conservation of your Families, and the Perpetuating your Good Names and Fames to Posterity ; If you would be Esteemed through the Christian World (as doubtlesse you deserve) a wise just, and a Loyal Parliament, let me beseech you to find out a present way, to prevent willful Perjury in Capitall Cases ; and to take care, that it be punish'd, in such an exquisit manner, as the greatness of the Occasion, and the Hainousnesse of the Offence does deserve. Otherwise you are never like to know, who are reall Traytors, nor how soon some of you that are Innocent, may be brought into the number. I pray God Almighty blest his Majesty with long Life, and blest your Proceedings with as much Success as you desire ; the same tending allways to the Glory of God, and the lasting Peace, and Prosperity of the King and his Kingdomes.

FINIS.